

## **Rom 1:18b-23      Why the human race needs a Savior**

“Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible **attributes** are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made [nature], even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.”

1. **Ungodliness**: This refers to man’s offenses against God.  
**Unrighteousness** refers to the sins of man against man.
  2. **Who suppress the truth in unrighteousness**: Mankind does in fact **suppress the truth** of God. Every truth revealed to man by God has been fought against, disregarded, and deliberately obscured.
  3. **His invisible attributes are clearly seen**: God shows us something of His **eternal power and** divine nature through **creation, by the things that are made**. He has given a **general revelation** that is obvious both in creation and within the mind and heart of man.
  4. **Clearly seen**: The universal character of this revelation and the clarity of it leave man **without excuse** for rejecting it. “Men cannot charge God with hiding Himself from them and thus excuse their irreligion and their immorality.”
  5. **Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God**: The problem is not that man did not know God, but that he did know Him – yet refused to **glorify Him as God**.      Mankind is now **without excuse**.
- Instead of glorifying God we transformed our idea of Him into forms and images more comfortable to our corrupt and darkened hearts.
  - Mankind can’t seem to resist the temptation to create God into their own corrupt image, or even in an image beneath us. Tragically, we inescapably become like the god we serve.
  - It is essential that we constantly compare our own conception of God against the reality of who God is as revealed in His Word. We can also be guilty of worshipping a self-made God.

- **Image** in Romans 1:23 is the ancient Greek word *eikon*. It is a dangerous thing to change the **glory of the incorruptible God into an *eikon* (image)** of your own choosing.

e. **Nor were thankful**: Man's *ingratitude* against God is shocking.

a. **Professing to be wise, they became fools**: Our rejection of God's general revelation makes mankind **futile in their thoughts**, and makes our **foolish hearts darkened** – and we become **fools**.

- Once a person rejects the truth of God in Jesus, they will fall for anything foolish, and trust far more feeble systems than what he rejects from God.
- This futility of thinking, darkening of the heart, and folly is seen as an example of God's righteous wrath against those who reject what He reveals.

**Part of His judgment against us is allowing us to endure  
the damage our sinful course leads to.**

Rom. 1:24-32      **The tragic result of human guilt before God.**

“Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise, also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”

- **God also gave them up**: In His righteous wrath and judgment, God gives man up to the sin his evil heart's desire, allowing him to experience the self-destructive result of sin.
- This phrase is so important Paul repeats it three times in this passage.
- Hosea 4:17 expresses the judgmental aspect of God “giving us up,” leaving us to our own sin: Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.

- We make a mistake when we think that it's God's mercy or kindness that allows man to continue in sin. It is actually His wrath that allows us to go on destroying ourselves with sin.
- **Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie**: In every rebellion and disobedience against God we exchange **the truth of God for the lie** of our own choosing and set the **creature** above the **Creator**.
- Paul uses the definite article – it is not a lie, but **the lie**.
- **The lie** is essentially idolatry – which puts us in the place of God. It is the lie you will be like God - Genesis 3:5.
- **For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions**: Paul wrote this from the city of Corinth, where every sort of sexual immorality and ritualistic prostitution was practiced freely. The terminology of Romans 1:24 refers to this combination of sexual immorality and idolatrous worship.
- This begins a passage where Paul describes the sin and corruption of the pagan world with an amazing directness – “**For even their women exchanged the natural use**: Paul uses homosexuality – both in the female and the male expressions – as an example of God giving mankind over to uncleanness and lust.
- Some say the Bible nowhere condemns lesbian homosexuality, but the “**likewise**” of Romans 1:27 makes it clear that the sin of homosexuality condemned in Romans 1:27 is connected to the sin of women mentioned in Romans 1:26.
- Paul doesn't even use the normal words for **men** and **women** here; he uses the words for **male** and **female**, using categories that describe sexuality outside of human terms, because the type of sexual sin he describes is outside of human dignity.
- Paul categorizes the whole section under the idea of **vile passions** – unhealthy, unholy. Paul lived in a culture that openly approved of homosexuality. Paul was making a stand for righteousness in the midst of an ungodly society.

Paul wrote to a culture where homosexuality was accepted as a part of life for both men and women. For some 200 years, the men who ruled the Roman Empire openly practiced homosexuality often with young boys.

- A significant number of Christians now believe that homosexuality and same-sex marriage are acceptable in the eyes of the Lord.

- We cannot compromise what the Scriptures teach: God created humans as male and female, and marriage is intended to be between one man and one-woman Genesis 1:26-28; 2:24; Matthew 19:4-5; Romans 1:27; Leviticus 18:22.  
“Then God said, “Let us make human beings in Our image, to be like Us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”
- <sup>27</sup> So God created human beings in His own image.  
In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.
- <sup>28</sup> Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”
- Gen. 2:24 “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”
- Matt 19:4-5 “Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’” <sup>5</sup> And He said, ““This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”
- Rom. 1:25-27 “They traded the truth about God for a lie. So, they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen. <sup>26</sup> That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.”

At times the Roman Empire specifically taxed [as an occupation] & approved homosexual prostitution and gave boy prostitutes a legal holiday. Legal marriage between same gender couples was recognized, and many of the emperors married other men.

At the very time Paul wrote, Nero was emperor. He took a boy named Sporus and had him castrated, then married him (with a full ceremony), brought him to the palace with a great procession, and made the boy his “wife.” He had his wife killed and the young boy dressed as his former wife.

Later, Nero lived with another man, and Nero was the “wife.”

In modern culture, homosexual practice reflects the abandonment of giving **them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves**. A study demonstrated that male homosexuals have markedly earlier first-time sexual experiences, many more sexual partners over their lifetime, and are much more likely to have more than one sexual partner at a time as compared to male heterosexuals or females.

Male homosexuals also had more sexual partners who were considerably older or younger than themselves, compared to male heterosexuals or females.

Glick, MorrisFoxman; <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3334840/>

Other research indicates that male homosexuals have multiple partners (4 or more in the last 12 months) at almost three times the rate as heterosexual men and almost eight times the rate of heterosexual women.

England, Brown, <https://contexts.org/blog/an-unequal-distribution-of-partners-gays-versus-straight/>

- **Receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due:**

Paul speaks of a **penalty** for homosexual conduct; homosexuality has within itself a penalty. This speaks of the generally self-destructive nature of sin; it often carries within itself its own penalty.

Sometimes, the penalty of disease, which is the consequence of violating nature's order. Sometimes, the penalty of rebellion resulting in spiritual emptiness.

- This “freedom” to disobey gives the freedom to **receive in themselves the penalty of their error.**
- As further judgment, God gives man **over to a debased mind**, so that things that are disgraceful and sickening **are readily accepted and approved.**
- The word **debased** (or *reprobate* in the KJV) originally meant “**that which has not stood the test.**”
- A term used of coins that were below standard and therefore rejected.
- The idea is that since man did not “approve” to know God, they came to have an “unapproved” mind.
- “The human race put God to the test for the purpose of approving Him should He meet the specifications which it laid down for a God who would be to their liking, and finding that He did not meet those specifications, man refused to approve Him as the God to be worshipped or have Him in its knowledge.” (Wuest) - Bible translator
- **A debased mind:** Our rebellion against God is not only displayed in our **actions**, but in our **thinking**. We are genuinely “spiritually insane” in our rebellion against God.
- The list in Romans 1:29-31 gives concrete examples of the kind of **things which are not fitting.**
- Sins such as **covetousness**, **envy** and **pride** are included along with “socially unacceptable” sins (such as **murder** and being **unloving**).

**Covetousness**: This word literally describes **the itch for more**, usually what someone else has.

**Whisperers**: “Secret detractors; those who, under pretended secrecy, carry about accusations against their neighbors, whether true or false; blasting their reputation.

**Envy**: Envy is so powerful that there is a sense in which it put Jesus on the cross.

- Pilate *knew that they had handed Him over because of envy* Matthew 27:18.

**Proud**: “They who are continually exalting themselves and depressing others; magnifying themselves at the expense of their neighbors.

Those who either **practice** or **approve** of these things are **worthy of death**; they are the targets of the wrath of God.

What is the source of all this violence, immorality, cruelty, and degradation come from?

**It happens when mankind abandons the true knowledge of God,  
and the state of society reflects God’s judgment upon them for this.**

What should be our attitude as followers of Jesus Christ towards those choosing this lifestyle?

### **1Cor. 6:9-11**

9 Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God?

Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality,

10. or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—**none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.**

11. **Some of you were once like that. But you were [are] cleansed; you were [are] made holy; you were [are] made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

**We walk in mercy showing grace and love to ALL those who don’t walk with Jesus!  
Only Jesus can redeem the life who is at odds with the Lord.**

**His mercy and love can change a life and bring it back into alignment with the Lord’s purposes for His destiny.**